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## RICH IN GOD

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I wholeheartedly congratulate all those who have made possible, these twenty years, the celebration of the Mass at the Foire Brayonne. I want to share with you the Word of God that was proclaimed there, this year: « So it is with those who store up treasures for themselves but are not rich toward God. » [Luke 12:21]

### THE SCANDAL OF VANITY

The scriptural readings can sometimes appear unusual. For instance, what could have led the author of the Book of Ecclesiastes to write: [Ecclesiastes 1:2, 21] « *Vanity of vanities! All is vanity... Sometimes one who has toiled with wisdom and knowledge and skill must leave all to be enjoyed by another who did not toil for it. This also is vanity..* » And he adds: « *What do mortals get from all the toil and strain with which they toil under the sun? For all their days are full of pain, and their work is vexation; even at night their minds do not rest. This also is vanity.* » [Ibid., verses 22-23] These words could have been written or spoken last week, on the radio or television, in the newspaper or on open-line radio programmes. These words sound strangely like what we ourselves say: Why go to so much trouble, so much pain? Why go through so much suffering? What's the use? And we feel moody and depressed... We lose the meaning of life, the sense of each present moment... What does a fair like the Foire Brayonne give? What does such and such an activity, such and such a gadget, bring? Isn't all of this vanity?... It certainly would all be vanity if there had not been Someone to take on our human nature and turn it into a priceless splendour.

### MEMORABLE MOMENTS AND GESTURES

Human life is worth living, and every moment can be wonderful. Ever since Jesus took on the human condition, everything can become like a moment of eternity. The least gesture, the smallest glass of water can carry with it unsuspected consequences. Every gesture and every loving word can be a gesture or word of God. "To become rich for God" means to be attuned to heavenly realities; it means to strive after the realities of above rather than after those below, of the earth. It means to root out in us what is of the earth, to get rid of the ways of acting of the old person in us and to put on the new one which the Creator always reshapes anew in His own image, in order to bring it to true knowledge. "To become rich for God" means to enter as deeply as possible the depths of one's being and to learn to see beyond appearances, beyond the immediate.

### CLAIMS TO FAME

We are not just anybody. We are the members of Jesus Christ. We who are baptised are beloved children of the Father united to Jesus in a special way. Jesus lives in us and we live in him. We are the Body of Christ. We are loved by the Holy Spirit, and there is no barrier between us. « *There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female, for all of you are one in Christ Jesus.* » [Galatians 3:28] It is good for us to meditate often on our condition of baptised person: that is our claim to fame. Not that we have had anything to do with that, all is grace and gift of God. But what a gift! We hold a treasure in our hands, our entire being bears a priceless treasure. And contrary to that rich man whom the Gospel calls foolish, [Luke 12:16-20] we must look beyond the here and now. The fool wanted to collect, horde, and stockpile. He wanted to build and build again. His greed was insatiable, somewhat like those obsessed with food, drink, and gambling, the compulsively obsessed.

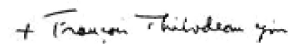
## A TREASURE

During our Sunday celebrations let us take note of the projects and plans we have with Him, the plans of life of lovers, couples, parents, and families, and let us confidently offer them to the Lord. This, too, is a way of becoming rich in God. To keep one's lamp trimmed, to boldly walk, to love and to know that one is loved. I invite you to meditate the words of a beautiful song by priest-poet Robert Lebel:

*We bear a treasure in clay jars,  
Clay of our bodies, a Gospel treasure.  
Treasure of faith and of hope, of amazing richness!  
Treasure of life and of presence that overwhelms us.  
Treasure for those who seek and no longer know how to reach  
to the very root of their being, in order to experience rebirth  
and find You.  
Treasure that opens to the heart of the poor as soon  
as your voice reaches him.  
But our voices, among so many... is it really an echo of yours?  
Treasure filled with your promises; but in order to discover it,  
we must strip ourselves of our wisdom and let You dress us.*

## SAINT JOHN EUDES

On this feastday of Saint John Eudes [Born 1601, died 1680. Founder of the Congregation of Jesus and Mary, the "Eudist Fathers"] I join in spirit my worldwide Eudist family. I am fond of repeating a quote from our saintly Founder: « *I shall consider that God has loved me ceaselessly and unconditionally not only from all eternity, but that He loves me with everything He has, since He is all loving towards me and He loves me with the purest love.* » Have a good week!



+ François Thibodeau  
Bishop of Edmundston

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